

§ 438.404

(ii) The enrollee or the provider may file an appeal either orally or in writing, and unless he or she requests expedited resolution, must follow an oral filing with a written, signed, appeal.

§ 438.404 Notice of action.

(a) *Language and format requirements.* The notice must be in writing and must meet the language and format requirements of § 438.10(c) and (d) to ensure ease of understanding.

(b) *Content of notice.* The notice must explain the following:

(1) The action the MCO or PIHP or its contractor has taken or intends to take.

(2) The reasons for the action.

(3) The enrollee's or the provider's right to file an MCO or PIHP appeal.

(4) If the State does not require the enrollee to exhaust the MCO or PIHP level appeal procedures, the enrollee's right to request a State fair hearing.

(5) The procedures for exercising the rights specified in this paragraph.

(6) The circumstances under which expedited resolution is available and how to request it.

(7) The enrollee's right to have benefits continue pending resolution of the appeal, how to request that benefits be continued, and the circumstances under which the enrollee may be required to pay the costs of these services.

(c) *Timing of notice.* The MCO or PIHP must mail the notice within the following timeframes:

(1) For termination, suspension, or reduction of previously authorized Medicaid-covered services, within the timeframes specified in §§ 431.211, 431.213, and 431.214 of this chapter.

(2) For denial of payment, at the time of any action affecting the claim.

(3) For standard service authorization decisions that deny or limit services, within the timeframe specified in § 438.210(d)(1).

(4) If the MCO or PIHP extends the timeframe in accordance with § 438.210(d)(1), it must—

(i) Give the enrollee written notice of the reason for the decision to extend the timeframe and inform the enrollee of the right to file a grievance if he or she disagrees with that decision; and

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(ii) Issue and carry out its determination as expeditiously as the enrollee's health condition requires and no later than the date the extension expires.

(5) For service authorization decisions not reached within the timeframes specified in § 438.210(d) (which constitutes a denial and is thus an adverse action), on the date that the timeframes expire.

(6) For expedited service authorization decisions, within the timeframes specified in § 438.210(d).

§ 438.406 Handling of grievances and appeals.

(a) *General requirements.* In handling grievances and appeals, each MCO and each PIHP must meet the following requirements:

(1) Give enrollees any reasonable assistance in completing forms and taking other procedural steps. This includes, but is not limited to, providing interpreter services and toll-free numbers that have adequate TTY/TTD and interpreter capability.

(2) Acknowledge receipt of each grievance and appeal.

(3) Ensure that the individuals who make decisions on grievances and appeals are individuals—

(i) Who were not involved in any previous level of review or decision-making; and

(ii) Who, if deciding any of the following, are health care professionals who have the appropriate clinical expertise, as determined by the State, in treating the enrollee's condition or disease.

(A) An appeal of a denial that is based on lack of medical necessity.

(B) A grievance regarding denial of expedited resolution of an appeal.

(C) A grievance or appeal that involves clinical issues.

(b) *Special requirements for appeals.* The process for appeals must:

(1) Provide that oral inquiries seeking to appeal an action are treated as appeals (to establish the earliest possible filing date for the appeal) and must be confirmed in writing, unless the enrollee or the provider requests expedited resolution.

(2) Provide the enrollee a reasonable opportunity to present evidence, and allegations of fact or law, in person as